

Libet Colligij A Regij Abordone

TREATISE OF

Civil power

*Ex Dono Mrⁱ I N Jacobi Trajet
Ecclesiastical causes. 1652.*

SHEWING

That it is not lawfull for any
power on earth to compell
in matters of

Religion.

The author J. M.

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Anno 1652.



TO THE
PARLIAMENT
OF THE
Commonwealth of ENGLAND
with the dominions therof.

I Have prepar'd, su-
pream Council, a-
gainst the much ex-
pected time of your sitting,
this treatise; which,
though to all Christian
magistrates equally be-
longing, and therefore to
have bin written in the

common language of Chri-
stendom, natural dutie
and affection hath con-
fin'd, and dedicated first
to my own nation: and in
a season wherin the timely
reading therof, to the easi-
er accomplishment of your
great work, may save you
much labor and interrup-
tion: of two parts usu-
ally propos'd, civil and
ecclesiastical, recom-
mending civil only to
your proper care, ecclesi-
astical

astical to them only from whom it takes both that name and nature. Yet not for this cause only do I require or trust to finde acceptance, but in a two-fold respect besides: first as bringing cleer evidence of scripture and protestant maxims to the Parliament of England, who in all thir late acts, upon occasion, have professd to assert only the true protestant Christianre-

A 3 ligion,

ligion, as it is containid in
the holy scriptures: next,
in regard that your power
being but for a time, and
having in your selves a
Christian libertie of your
own, which at one time or
other may be oppressd,
therof truly sensible, it
will concern you while you
are in power, so to regard
other mens consciences, as
you would your own should
be regarded in the power
of others; and to consider
that

that any law against con-
science is alike in force a-
gainst any conscience, and
so may one way or other
justly redound upon your
selves. One advantage I
make no doubt of, that I
shall write to many emi-
nent persons of your num-
ber, alreadie perfet and
resolv'd in this important
article of Christianitie.
Some of whom I remem-
ber to have heard often
for several years, at a

council next in autorite
to your own, so well joining
religion with civil pru-
dence, and yet so well di-
stinguishing the different
power of either, and this
not only voting, but fre-
quently reasoning why it
should be so, that if any
there present had bin
before of an opinion con-
trary, he might doubt-
less have departed thence
a convert in that point,
and have confessd, that then

then both commonwealth
and religion will at
length, if ever, flourish
in Christendom, when
either they who govern
discern between civil and
religious, or they only
who so discern shall be
admitted to govern. Till
then nothing but troubles,
persecutions, commotions
can be expected; the in-
ward decay of true reli-
gion among our selves,
and the utter overthrow

at last by a common enemy.
Of civil libertie I have
written heretofore by the
appointment, and not
without the approbation
of civil power: of Chri-
stian liberty I write now;
which others long since
having don with all free-
dom under heathen em-
perors, I should do wrong
to suspect, that I now shall
with less under Christian
governors, and such es-
pecially as profess openly
thir

thir defence of Christian
libertie; although I write
this not otherwise ap-
pointed or induc'd then
by an inward perswasion
of the Christian dutie
which I may usefully dis-
charge herin to the com-
mon Lord and Master of
us all, and the certain
hope of his approbation,
first and chiefest to be
sought: In the hand of
whose providence I re-
main, praying all success
and

and good event on your
publick counsels to the
defence of true religion
and our civil rights.

JOHN MILTON.



A Treatise of Civil power in Ecclesiastical causes.

TWO things there be which have bin ever found working much mischief to the church of God, and the advancement of truth; force on the one side restraining, and hire on the other side corrupting the teachers thereof. Few ages have bin since the ascension of our Saviour, wherin the one of these two, or both together have not prevaild. It can be at no time therfore unseasonable to speak of these things; since by them the church is either in continual detriment

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triment and oppression, or in continual danger. The former shall be at this time my argument; the latter as I shall finde God dispensing me, and opportunity inviting. What I argue, shall be drawn from the scripture only; and therin from true fundamental principles of the gospel; to all knowing Christians undeniable. And if the governors of this commonwealth since the rooting out of prelats have made least use of force in religion, and most have favor'd Christian liberty of any in this Iland before them since the first preaching of the gospel, for which we are not to forget our thanks to God, and their due praise, they may, I doubt not, in this treatise finde that which not only will confirm them to defend still the Christian liberty which we

we enjoy, but will incite them also to enlarge it, if in aught they yet straiten it. To them who perhaps hereafter, less experienc'd in religion, may come to govern or give us laws, this or other such, if they please, may be a timely instruction: however to the truth it will be at all times no unneedfull testimonie; at least some discharge of that general dutie which no Christian but according to what he hath receivd, knows is requir'd of him if he have aught more conduced to the advancement of religion then what is usually endeavoured, freely to impart it.

It will require no great labor of exposition to unfold what is here meant by matters of religion; being as soon apprehended as defin'd, such things as belong chiefly

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chiefly to the knowledge and service of God: and are either above the reach and light of nature without revelation from above, and therfore liable to be variously understood by humane reason, or such things as are enjoind or forbidden by divine precept, which els by the light of reason would seem indifferent to be don or not don; and so likewise must needs appear to everie man as the precept is understood. Whence I here mean by conscience or religion, that full perswasion whereby we are assur'd that our beleef and practise, as far as we are able to apprehend and probably make appear, is according to the will of God & his Holy Spirit within us, which we ought to follow much rather then any law of man, as not only his word every where bids us,

us, but the very dictate of reason tells us. *Act. 4. 19.* whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken to you more then to God, judge ye. That for beleef or practise in religion according to this conscientious perswasion no man ought be punishd or molested by any outward force on earth whatsoever, I distrust not, through Gods implor'd assistance, to make plane by these following arguments.

First it cannot be deni'd, being the main foundation of our protestant religion, that we of these ages, having no other divine rule or autoritie from without us warrantable to oneanother as a common ground but the holy scripture, and no other within us but the illumination of the Holy Spirit so interpreting that scripture as warrantable only to our selves and to

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to such whose consciences we can so perswade, can have no other ground in matters of religion but only from the scriptures. And these being not possible to be understood without this divine illumination, which no man can know at all times to be in himself, much less to be at any time for certain in any other, it follows clearly, that no man or body of men in these times can be the infallible judges or determiners in matters of religion to any other mens consciences but thir own. And therfore those Beroeans are commended, *Act. 17.11*, who after the preaching even of S. Paul, searchd *the scriptures daily*, whether those things were so. Nor did they more then what God himself in many places commands us by the same apostle, to search, to try, to judge

of

of these things our selves: And gives us reason also, *Gal. 6. 4,5.* X
let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another: for every man shall bear his own burden. If then we count it so ignorant and irreligious in the papist to think himself discharged in Gods account, beleeving only as the church beleevs, how much greater condemnation will it be to the protestant his condemner, to think himself justified, beleeving only as the state beleevs: With good cause therefore it is the general consent of all sound protestant writers, that neither traditions, councels nor canons of any visible church, much less edicts of any magistrate or civil session, but the scripture only can be the final judge or rule in matters

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ters of religion, and that only in
the conscience of every Christian
to himself. Which protestation
made by the first publick reformers
of our religion against the im-
perial edicts of *Charls* the fifth, im-
posing church-traditions without
scripture, gave first beginning to
the name of *Protestant*; and with
that name hath ever bin receivd,
this doctrine, which preferrs the
scripture before the church, and
acknowledges none but the Scri-
pture sole interpreter of it self to
the conscience. For if the church
be not sufficient to be implicitly
beleevd, as we hold it is not, what
can there els be nam'd of more
autoritie then the church but the
conscience; then which God only
is greater, i *Job.* 3.20? But if any
man shall pretend, that the scri-
pture judges to his conscience for
other

*The word of God y^e promisid
Holy Spirit y^e mind of Christ
in Ecclesiastical causes.* 9

other men, he makes himself greater not only then the church, but also then the scripture, then the consciences of other men; a presumption too high for any mortal; since every true Christian able to give a reason of his faith, hath the word of God before him, the promised Holy Spirit, and the minde of Christ within him, *I Cor. 2. 16*; a much better and safer guide of conscience, which as far as concerns himself he may far more certainly know then any outward rule impos'd upon him by others whom he inwardly neither knows nor can know; at least knows nothing of them more sure then this one thing, that they cannot be his judges in religion. *I Cor. 2. 15.* *the spiritual man judgeth all things,* but he himself is judgd of no man. Chiefly for this cause do all true

Pro-

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protestants account the pope antichrist, for that he assumes to himself this infallibilitie over both the conscience and the scripture ; *siting in the temple of God*, as it were opposite to God, and exalting himself above all that is called god, or is worshipd, 2 Thess. 2.4. That is to say not only above all judges and magistrates, who though they be calld gods, are far beneath infallible, but also above God himself, by giving law both to the scripture, to the conscience, and to the spirit it self of God within us.

Wheras we finde, James 4. 12, there is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy : who art thou that judgest another ? That Christ is the only lawgiver of his church and that it is here meant in religious matters, no well grounded Christian will deny. Thus also

S. Paul

S. Paul, Rom. 14. 4. who art thou
that judgest the servant of another ?
to his own Lord he standeth or falleth:
but he shall stand; for God is able to
make him stand. As therfore of one
beyond expression bold and pre-
sumptuous, both these apostles
demand, who art thou that pre-
sum'st to impose other law or
judgment in religion then the
only lawgiver and judge Christ,
who only can save and can destroy,
gives to the conscience ? And the
forecited place to the Thessalonians
by compar'd effects resolv's us,
that be he or they who or wher-
ever they be or can be, they are of
far less autoritie then the church,
whom in these things as prote-
stants they receive not, and yet no
less antichrist in this main point
of antichristianism, no less a pope
or popedom then he at Rome, if
not

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not much more; by setting up supream interpreters of scripture either those doctors whom they follow, or, which is far worse, themselves as a civil papacie assuming unaccountable supremacie to themselves not in civil only but ecclesiastical causes. Seeing then that in matters of religion, as hath been prov'd, none can judge or determin here on earth, no not church-governors themselves against the consciences of other beleevers, my inference is, or rather not mine but our Saviours own, that in those matters they neither can command nor use constraint; lest they run rashly on a pernicious consequence, forewarnd in that parable Mat. 13. from the 26 to the 31 verse: least while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both

both grow together until the harvest : and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares &c. whereby he declares that this work neither his own ministers nor any els can discerningly anough or judgingly perform without his own immediat direction, in his own fit season ; and that they ought till then not to attempt it. Which is further confirm'd 2 Cor. 1. 24. not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy. If apostles had no dominion or constraining power over faith or conscience, much less have ordinary ministers. 1 Pet. 5. 2,3. feed the flock of God not by constraint &c. neither as being lords over Gods heritage. But some will object, that this overthrows all church-discipline, all censure of errors, if no man can determin.

My answer is, that what they hear
is plane scripture; which forbids
not church-sentence or determin-
ning, but as it ends in violence
upon the conscience unconvinc'd.

Let who so will interpret or de-
termin, so it be according to true
church-discipline; which is exer-
cise'd on them only who have wil-
lingly joind themselves in that
covnant of union, and proceeds
only to a separation from the rest,
proceeds never to any corporal
inforcement or forfeiture of mo-
nie; which in spiritual things are
the two arms of Antichrist, not
of the true church; the one being
an inquisition, the other no better
then a temporal indulgence of sin
for monie, whether by the church
exacted or by the magistrate; both
the one and the other a temporal
satisfaction for what Christ hath
satisfied

satisfied eternally; a popish commuting of penaltie, corporal for spiritual; a satisfaction to man especially to the magistrate, for what and to whom we owe none: these and more are the injustices of force and fining in religion, besides what I most insist on, the violation of Gods express commandment in the gospel, as hath bin shewn. Thus then if church-governors cannot use force in religion, though but for this reason, because they cannot infallibly determin to the conscience without convincement, much less have civil magistrates autoritie to use force where they can much less judge; unless they mean only to be the civil executioners of them who have no civil power to give them such commission, no nor yet ecclesiastical to any force or

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violence in religion. To summe up all in brief, if we must beleeve as the magistrate appoints, why not rather as the church? if not as either without convincement, how can force be lawfull? But some are ready to cry out, what shall then be don to blasphemie? Them I would first exhort not thus to terrifie and pose the people with a Greek word: but to teach them better what it is; being a most usual and common word in that language to signifie any slander, any malitious or evil speaking, whether against God or man or any thing to good belonging: blasphemie or evil speaking against God malitiously, is far from conscience in religion; according to that of *Marc 9. 39.* there is none who doth a powerfull work in my name, and can likely speak evil of me.

me. If this suffice not, I referre them to that prudent and well deliberated act *August 9. 1650;* where the Parliament defines blasphemie against God, as far as it is a crime belonging to civil judicature, *pleniū ac melius Chrysippo & Crantore*; in plane English more warily, more judiciously, more orthodoxally then twice thir number of divines have don in many a prolix volume: although in all likelihood they whose whole studie and profession these things are should be most intelligent and authentic therin, as they are for the most part, yet neither they nor these unnerring always or infallible. But we shall not carrie it thus; another Greek apparition stands in our way, *heresie* and *heretic*; in like manner also rail'd at to the people as in a tongue un-

known. They should first interpret to them, that heresie by what it signifies in that language, is no word of evil note; meaning only the choise or following of any opinion good or bad in religion or any other learning: and thus not only in heathen authors, but in the New testament it self without censure or blame. *Acts 15. 5.* certain of the heresie of the Pharises which beleevd. and *26. 5.* after the exactest heresie of our religion I livd a Pharise. In which sense Presbyterian or Independent may without reproach be calld a heresie. Where it is mentiond with blame, it seems to differ little from schism *1 Cor. 11. 18, 19.* I hear that there be schisms among you &c. for there must also heresies be among you &c; though some who write of heresie after their own heads, would make it

it far worse then schism ; wheras on the contrarie, schism signifies division, and in the worst sense ; heresie, choise only of one opinion before another, which may bee without discord. In apostolic times therfore ere the scripture was written, heresie was a doctrin maintainind against the doctrin by them deliverd : which in these times can be no otherwise defin'd then a doctrin maintainind against the light, which we now only have, of the scripture. Seeing therfore that no man, no synod, no session of men, though calld the church, can judge definitively the sense of scripture to another mans conscience, which is well known to be a general maxim of the Protestant religion, it follows planely, that he who holds in religion that beleef or those

opinions which to his conscience and utmost understanding appear with most evidence or probabilitie in the scripture, though to others he seem erroneous, can no more be justly censur'd for a heretic then his censurers ; who do but the same thing themselves while they censure him for so doing. For ask them, or any Protestant, which hath most autoritie, the church or the scripture : they will answer, doubtless, that the scripture : and what hath most autoritie, that no doubt but they will confess is to be followd. He then who to his best apprehension follows the scripture, though against any point of doctrine by the whole church receivd, is not the heretic ; but he who follows the church against his conscience and perswasion ground-ed on the scripture. To make this yet

yet more undeniable, I shall only borrow a plane similie, the same which our own writers, when they would demonstrate planet that we rightly preferre the scripture before the church, use frequently against the Papist in this manner. As the Samaritans beleevd Christ, first for the womans word, but next and much rather for his own; so we the scripture; first on the churches word, but afterwards and much more for its own, as the word of God; yea the church it self we beleeve then for the scripture. The inference of it self follows: if by the Protestant doctrine we beleeve the scripture not for the churches saying; but for its own as the word of God, then ought we to beleeve what in our conscience we apprehend the scripture to say, though the visible

church with all her doctors gainsay ; and being taught to beleieve them only for the scripture, they who so do are not heretics, but the best protestants : and by their opinions, whatever they be, can hurt no protestant, whose rule is not to receive them but from the scripture : which to interpret convincingly to his own conscience none is able but himself guided by the Holy Spirit ; and not so guided, none then he to himself can be a worse deceiver. To protestants therfore whose common rule and touchstone is the scripture , nothing can with more conscience, more equitie, nothing more protestantly can be permitted then a free and lawful debate at all times by writing , conference or disputation of what opinion soever , disputable by scripture :

pture: concluding, that no man in religion is properly a heretic at this day, but he who maintains traditions or opinions not probable by scripture; who, for aught I know, is the papist only; he the only heretic, who counts all heretics but himself. Such as these, indeed, were capitally punishd by the law of *Moses*, as the only true heretics, idolaters, plane and open deserters of God and his known law: but in the gospel such are punishd by excommunication only.

Tit. 3.10. an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject. But they who think not this heavie anough and understand not that dreadfull aw and spiritual efficacie which the apostle hath expressd so highly to be in church-discipline, *2 Cor. 10.* of which anon, and think weakly that the church of God

cannot

cannot long subsist but in a bodilie fear, for want of other prooff will needs wrest that place of S. *Paul Rom. 13.* to set up civil inquisition, and give power to the magistrate both of civil judgment and punishment in causes ecclesiastical. But let us see with what strength of argument. *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.* First, how prove they that the apostle means other powers then such as they to whom he writes were then under; who medld not at all in ecclesiastical causes, unless as tyrants and persecuters; and from them, I hope, they will not derive either the right of magistrates to judge in spiritual things, or the dutie of such our obedience. How prove they next, that he intitles them here to spiritual causes, from whom he withheld, as much as in him lay,

the

the judging of civil; *1 Cor. 6.1, &c.* If he himself appeal'd to *Cesar*, it was to judge his innocence, not his religion. *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.* then are they not a terror to conscience, which is the rule or judge of good works grounded on the scripture. But heresie, they say, is reck'nd among evil works *Gal. 5.20*: as if all evil works were to be punish'd by the magistrate; wherof this place, thir own citation, reck'ns up besides heresie a sufficient number to confute them; *uncleanness, wantonness, enmitie, strife, emulations, animosities, contentions, envyings;* all which are far more manifest to be judgd by him then heresie, as they define it; and yet I suppose they will not subject these evil works nor many more such like to his cognisance

and

and punishment. *Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power ? do that which is good and thou shalt have praise of the same.* This shews that religious matters are not here meant ; wherin from the power here spoken of they could have no praise. *For he is the minister of God to thee for good.* true ; but in that office and to that end and by those means which in this place must be clearly found, if from this place they intend to argue. And how for thy good by forcing , oppressing and insnaring thy conscience ? Many are the ministers of God, and thir offices no less different then many ; none more different then state and church-government. Who seeks to govern both must needs be worse then any lord prelat or church-pluralist : for he in his own facultie

cultie and profession, the other not in his own and for the most part not thoroughly understood makes himself supream lord or pope of the church as far as his civil jurisdiction stretches, and all the ministers of God therin, his ministers, or his curates rather in the function onely, not in the government: while he himself assumes to rule by civil power things to be rul'd only by spiritual: when as this very chapter v. 6 appointing him his peculiar office, which requires utmost attendance, forbids him this worse then church-plurality from that full and waightie charge, wherin alone he is *the minister of God*, attending continually on this very thing. To little purpose will they here instance *Moses*, who did all by immediate divine direction,

no nor yet *Asa*, *Fehosaphat*, or *Sofia*, who both might when they
pleasd receive answer from God, and had a commonwealth by him
deliverd them, incorporated with
a national church exercis'd more
in bodily then in spiritual wor-
ship, so as that the church might
be calld a commonwealth and the
whole commonwealth a church:
nothing of which can be said of
Christianitie, deliverd without
the help of magistrates, yea in the
midst of thir opposition; how
little then with any reference to
them or mention of them, save
onely of our obedience to thir
civil laws, as they countnance
good and deterr evil: which is
the proper work of the magi-
strate, following in the same verse,
and shews distinctly wherin he is
the minister of God, *a revenger*

to

to execute wrath on him that doth evil. But we must first know who it is that doth evil: the heretic they say among the first. Let it be known then certainly who is a heretic: and that he who holds opinions in religion professdly from tradition or his own inventions ~~and not from Scripture but~~ rather against it, is the only heretic; and yet though such, not alwaies punishable by the magistrate, unless he do evil against a civil Law, properly so calld, hath been already prov'd without need of repetition. *But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid.* To do by scripture and the gospel according to conscience is not to do evil; if we therof ought not to be affraid, he ought not by his judging to give cause. causes therfore of Religion are not here meant.

meant. *For he beareth not the sword in vain.* Yes altogether in vain, if it smite he knows not what; if that for heresie which not the church it self, much less he, can determine absolutely to be so; if truth for error, being himself so often fallible, he bears the sword not in vain only, but unjustly and to evil. *Be subject not*
only for wrath, but for conscience sake: how for conscience sake against conscience? By all these reasons it appears plainly that the apostle in this place gives no judgment or coercive power to magistrates, neither to those then nor these now in matters of religion; and exhorts us no otherwise then he exhorted those *Romans*. It hath now twice befalln me to assert, through Gods assistance, this most wrested and vexd place

of scripture ; heretofore against Salmasius and regal tyranie over the state ; now against Erasmus and state-tyranie over the church. If from such uncertain or rather such improbable grounds as these they endue magistracie with spiritual judgment, they may as well invest him in the same spiritual kinde with power of utmost punishment, excommunication ; and then turn spiritual into corporal, as no worse authors did then Chrysostom, Ferom and Austin, whom Erasmus and others in thir notes on the New Testament have cited to interpret that cutting off which S. Paul wishd to them who had brought back the Galatians to circumcision, no less then the amercement of thir whole virilitie ; and Grotius addes that this concising punishment of circumcisers became a penal law ther-

therupon among the *Visigothes*: a dangerous example of beginning in the spirit to end so in the flesh: wheras that cutting off much like-
lier seems meant a cutting off from the church, not unusually so term'd in scripture, and a zealous impre-
cation, not a command. But I have mention'd this passage to shew how absurd they often prove who have not learn'd to distinguish rightly between civil power and ecclesi-
astical. How many persecutions then, imprisonments, banishments, penalties and stripes; how much bloodshed have the forcers of con-
science to answer for, and protestants rather then papists ! For the papist, judging by his principles, punishes them who beleieve not as the church beleevs though against the scripture: but the protestant, teaching every one to beleieve the

the scripture though against the church, counts heretical and persecutes, against his own principles, them who in any particular so beleeve as he in general teaches them ; them who most honor and beleeve divine scripture, but not against it any humane interpretation though universal ; them who interpret scripture only to themselves, which by his own position none but they to themselves can interpret ; them who use the scripture no otherwise by his own doctrine to thir edification, then he himself uses it to thir punishing : and so whom his doctrine acknowledges a true beleever, his discipline persecutes as a heretic. The papist exacts our beleef as to the church due above scripture ; and by the church, which is the whole people of God, understands the pope,

pope, the general councels prelati-
cal only and the surnam'd fathers :
but the forcing protestant though
he deny such beleef to any church
whatsoever, yet takes it to himself
and his teachers, of far less auto-
ritie then to be calld the church
and above scripture beleevd:which
renders his practise both contrarie
to his beleef, and far worse then
that beleef which he condemns in
the papist. By all which well con-
siderd, the more he professes to be
a true protestant, the more he hath
to answer for his persecuting then
a papist. No protestant therfore
of what sect soever following scri-
pture only, which is the common
sect wherin they all agree, and the
granted rule of everie mans con-
science to himself, ought, by the
common doctrine of protestants,
to be forc'd or molested for religi-
on.

on. But as for poperie and idolatrie, why they also may not hence plead to be tolerated, I have much less to say. Their religion the more considerd, the less can be acknowledgd a religion; but a Roman principalitie rather, endeavouring to keep up her old universal dominion under a new name and meer shaddow of a catholic religion; being indeed more rightly nam'd a catholic heresie against the scripture; supported mainly by a civil, and, except in *Rome*, by a forein power: justly therfore to be suspected, not tolerated by the magistrate of another countrey. Besides, of an implicit faith, which they profess, the conscience also becoms implicit; and so by voluntarie servitude to mans law, forfets her Christian libertie. Who then can plead for such a conscience,

ence, as being implicitly enthralld to man instead of God, almost becoms no conscience, as the will not free, becoms no will. Nevertheless if they ought not to be tolerated, it is for just reason of state more then of religion; which they who force, though professing to be protestants, deserve as little to be tolerated themselves, being no less guiltie of poperie in the most popish point. Lastly, for idolatrie, who knows it not to be evidently against all scripture both of the Old and New Testament, and therfore a true heresie, or rather an impietie; wherin a right conscience can have naught to do; and the works therof so manifest, that a magistrate can hardly err in prohibiting and quite removing at least the publick and scandalous use therof.

From

From the riddance of these objections I proceed yet to another reason why it is unlawfull for the civil magistrate to use force in matters of religion ; which is, because to judge in those things, though we should grant him able, which is prov'd he is not, yet as a civil magistrate he hath no right. Christ hath a government of his own, sufficient of it self to all his ends and purposes in governing his church ; but much different from that of the civil magistrate ; and the difference in this verie thing principally consists, that it governs not by outward force, and that for two reasons. First because it deals only with the inward man and his actions, which are all spiritual and to outward force not hyable : secondly to shew us the divine excellency of his spiritual

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kingdom, able without worldly force to subdue all the powers and kingdoms of this world, which are upheld by outward force only. That the inward man is nothing els but the inward part of man, his understanding and his will, and that his actions thence proceeding, yet not simply thence but from the work of divine grace upon them, are the whole matter of religion under the gospel, will appear planely by considering what that religion is; whence we shall perceive yet more planely that it cannot be forc'd. What euangelic religion is, is told in two words, faith and charitie; or beleef and practise. That both these flow either the one from the understanding, the other from the will, or both jointly from both, once indeed naturally free, but now only

as they are regenerat and wrought on by divine grace, is in part evident to common sense and principles unquestioned, the rest by scripture: concerning our beleef, Mat. 16. 17. *flesh and blood hath not reveald it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven*: concerning our practise, as it is religious and not meerly civil, Gal. 5. 22, 23 and other places declare it to be the fruit of the spirit only. Nay our whole practical dutie in religion is containd in charitie, or the love of God and our neighbour, no way to be forc'd, yet the fulfilling of the whole law; that is to say, our whole practise in religion. If then both our beleef and practise, which comprehend our whole religion, flow from faculties of the inward man, free and unconstrainable of themselves by

nature, and our practise not only from faculties endu'd with freedom, but from love and charitie besides, incapable of force, and all these things by transgression lost, but renewd and regenerated in us by the power and gift of God alone, how can such religion as this admit of force from man, or force be any way appli'd to such religion, especially under the free offer of grace in the gospel, but it must forthwith frustrate and make of no effect both the religion and the gospel? And that to compell outward profession, which they will say perhaps ought to be compell'd though inward religion cannot, is to compell hypocrisy not to advance religion, shall yet, though of it self cleer anough, be ere the conclusion further manifest. The other reason why Christ rejects

rejects outward force in the go-
verment of his church, is, as I
said before, to shew us the divine
excellence of his spiritual king-
dom, able without worldly force
to subdue all the powers and king-
doms of this world, which are up-
held by outward force only: by
which to uphold religion other-
wise then to defend the religious
from outward violence, is no ser-
vice to Christ or his kingdom,
but rather a disparagement, and
degrades it from a divine and spi-
ritual kingdom to a kingdom of
this world: which he denies it to
be, because it needs not force to
confirm it: *Joh. 18. 36.* if my
kingdom were of this world, then
would my servants fight, that I should
not be deliverd to the Jewes. This
proves the kingdom of Christ not
governd by outward force; as

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being none of this world, whose kingdoms are maintaint all by force onely : and yet disproves not that a Christian commonwealth may defend it self against outward force in the cause of religion as well as in any other ; though Christ himself, coming purposelly to dye for us, would not be so defended. *1 Cor. 1.*

27. God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. Then surely he hath not chosen the force of this world to subdue conscience and conscientious men , who in this world are counted weakest ; but rather conscience, as being weakest, to subdue and regulate force, his adversarie, not his aide or instrument in governing the church. *2 Cor. 10. 3, 4, 5,*

6. for though we walk in the flesh,

we

we do not warre after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal; but mightie through God to the putting down of strong holds; casting down imaginations and everie high thing that exalts it self against the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivitie everie thought to the obedience of Christ: and having in a readiness to aveng all disobedience. It is evident by the first and second verses of this chapter, that the apostle here speaks of that spiritual power by which Christ governs his church, how allsufficient it is, how powerful to reach the conscience and the inward man with whom it chiefly deals and whom no power els can deal with. In comparison of which as it is here thus magnificently describ'd, how uneffectual and weak is outward force with all her bo-

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strous tooles, to the shame of those Christians and especially those churchmen, who to the exercising of church discipline never cease calling on the civil magistrate to interpose his fleshlie force; an argument that all true ministerial and spiritual power is dead within them: who think the gospel, which both began and spread over the whole world for above three hundred years under heathen and persecuting emperors, cannot stand or continue, supported by the same divine presence and protection to the worlds end, much easier under the defensive favor onely of a Christian magistrate, unless it be enacted and settled, as they call it, by the state, a statute or a state-religion: and understand not that the church it self cannot, much less the state, settle

settle or impose one tittle of religion upon our obedience implicit, but can only recommend or propound it to our free and conscientious examination : unless they mean to set the state higher then the church in religion, and with a grosse contradiction give to the state in thir settling petition that command of our implicit belief, which they deny in thir settled confession both to the state and to the church. Let them cease then to importune and interrupt the magistrate from attending to his own charge in civil and moral things, the settling of things just, things honest, the defence of things religious settled by the churches within themselves ; and the repressing of thir contraries determinable by the common light of nature ; which

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is not to constrain or to repress religion, probable by scripture, but the violaters and persecuters therof : of all which things he hath anough and more then anough to do, left yet undon ; for which the land groans and justice goes to wrack the while : let him also forbear force where he bath no right to judge ; for the conscience is not his province : least a worse *moe* arrive him, for worse offending, then was denounc'd by our Saviour *Matt. 23. 23.* against the Pharises : ye have forc'd the conscience, which was not to be forc'd ; but judgment and mercy ye have not executed : this ye should have don, and the other let alone. And since it is the councel and set purpose of God in the gospel by spiritual means which are counted weak, to overcom all power.

power which resists him ; let them not go about to do that by world-
ly strength which he hath decreed
to do by those means which the
world counts weakness, least they
be again obnoxious to that saying
which in another place is also writ-
ten of the Pharises, Luke 7. 30.
that they frustrated the council of
God. The main plea is, and urg'd
with much vehemence to thir imi-
tation, that the kings of Juda,
as I touchd before, and especially
Fosia both judgd and us'd force
in religion. 2 Chr. 34. 33. he made
all that were present in Israel to
serve the Lord their God: an argu-
ment, if it be well weighed, worse
then that us'd by the false prophet
Shemaia to the high priest, that in
imitation of Fehojada he ought to
put Feremie in the stocks, Fer. 29.
24, 26, &c. for which he receivd
his.

his due denouncement from God. But to this besides I return a three-fold answer : first, that the state of religion under the gospel is far differing from what it was under the law: then was the state of rigor, childhood, bondage and works, to all which force was not unbefitting; now is the state of grace, manhood, freedom and faith; to all which belongs willingness and reason, not force: the law was then written on tables of stone, and to be performd according to the letter, willingly or unwillingly; (the gospel, our new covnant, upon the heart of every beleever, to be interpreted only by the sense of charitie and inward perswasion: the law had no distinct government or governors of church and commonwealth, but the Priests and Levites judg'd in all.

all causes not ecclesiastical only
but civil, *Deut.* 17. 8, &c. which
under the gospel is forbidden to
all church-ministers, as a thing
which Christ thir master in his
ministerie disclam'd *Luke* 12. 14;
as a thing beneathe them *1 Cor.*
6. 4; and by many of our statutes,
as to them who have a peculiar
and far differing government of
thir own. If not, why different
the governors? why not church-
ministers in state-affairs, as well as
state-ministers in church-affairs?
If church and state shall be made
one flesh again as under the law,
let it be withall considerd, that
God who then joind them hath
now severd them; that which, he
so ordaining, was then a lawfull
conjunction, to such on either side
as join again what he hath severd,
would be nothing now but thir

own.

own presumptuous fornication. Secondly, the kings of *Juda* and those magistrates under the law might have recourse, as I said before, to divine inspiration; which our magistrates under the gospel have not, more then to the same spirit, which those whom they force have oft times in greater measure then themselves: and so, instead of forcing the Christian, they force the Holy Ghost; and, against that wise forewarning of *Gamaliel*, fight against God. Thirdly, those kings and magistrates us'd force in such things only as were undoubtedly known and forbidden in the law of *Moses*, idolatrie and direct apostacie from that national and strict enjoind worship of God; wherof the corporal punishment was by himself expressly set down: but magistrates

strates under the gospel, our free, elective and rational worship, are most commonly busiest to force those things which in the gospel are either left free, nay sometimes abolish'd when by them compell'd, or els controverted equally by writers on both sides, and sometimes with odds on that side which is against them. By which means they either punish that which they ought to favor and protect, or that with corporal punishment and of thir own inventing, which not they but the church hath receiv'd command to chastise with a spiritual rod only. Yet some are so eager in thir zeal of forcing, that they refuse not to descend at length to the utmost shift of that parabolical prooff *Luke 14. 16, &c. compell them to come in.* therfore magistrates may compell in religion.

As

As if a parable were to be strain'd through every word or phrase, and not expounded by the general scope therof: which is no other here then the earnest expression of Gods displeasure on those recusant Jewes, and his purpose to preferre the gentiles on any terms before them; express'd here by the word *compell*. But how compells he? doubtless no otherwise then he draws, without which no man can come to him, *Joh.6.44*: and that is by the inward perswasive motions of his spirit and by his ministers; not by the outward compulsions of a magistrate or his officers. The true people of Christ, as is foretold *Psal.110.3*, are a willing people in the day of his power: then much more now when he rules all things by outward weakness, that both his inward power

nd power and their sinceritie may the
nd more appeare. *God loveth a chear-*
ral full giver: then certainly is not
her pleaseid with an unchearfull wor-
on shiper; as the verie words declare
cu- of his euangelical invitations. *Esa.*
to 55. i. *ho, everie one that thirsteth,*
ms *come.* *Joh.7.37.* *if any man thirst,*
by *Rev.3.18.* *I counsel thee.* and 22.
m- 17. *whosoever will, let him take the*
ise *water of life freely.* And in that
no grand commission of preaching
4: to invite all nations *Marc 16. 16,*
va- as the reward of them who come,
oy so the penaltie of them who come
rd not is only spiritual. But they
his bring now some reason with thir
of force, which must not pass unan-
3, swerd; that the church of *Thya-*
is *tira* was blam'd *Rev. 2. 20* for
en suffering the false propheteſ to teach
ed and to seduce. I answer, that
ed seducement is to be hinderd by
er fit.

fit and proper means ordain'd in church-discipline ; by instant and powerfull demonstration to the contrarie ; by opposing truth to error, no unequal match ; truth the strong to error the weak though slie and shifting. Force is no honest confutation ; but unef-fectual, and for the most part un-successfull, oft times fatal to them who use it : sound doctrine dili-gently and duely taught , is of herself both sufficient , and of herself (if some secret judg-ment of God hinder not) alwaies prevalent against seducers. This the *Thyatirians* had neglected , suffering , against Church-disci-pline , that woman to teach and seduce among them : civil force they had not then in thir pow-er ; being the Christian part only of that citie , and then especi-ally

ally under one of those ten great persecutions , wherof this the second was raisd by Domitian : force therfore in these matters could not be requir'd of them, who were then under force themselves.

I have shewn that the civil power hath neither right nor can do right by forcing religious things : I will now shew the wrong it doth ; by violating the fundamental privilege of the gospel, the new-birthright of everie true beleever, Christian libertie. 2 Cor. 3.17. where the spirit of the Lord is, there is libertie. Gal. 4. 26. Ferusalem which is above, is free ; which is the mother of us all. and 31. we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free. It will be sufficient in this place to say no more of Christian libertie, then that it sets

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us free not only from the bondage of those ceremonies, but also from the forcible imposition of those circumstances, place and time in the worship of God: which though by him commanded in the old law, yet in respect of that veritie and freedom which is euangelical, *S.Paul* comprehends both kindes alike, that is to say, both ceremony and circumstance, under one and the same contemtuous name of *weak and beggarly rudiments*, *Gal.4.3.9,10. Col. 2.8.* with 16: conformable to what our Saviour himself taught *John 4. 21, 23.* neither in this mountain nor yet at *Ferusalem*. In spirit and in truth: for the father seeketh such to worship him. that is to say, not only sincere of heart, for such he sought ever, but also, as the words here chiefly import, not compell'd to place,

place, and by the same reason, not to any set time; as his apostle by the same spirit hath taught us *Rom. 14. 6, &c.* *one man esteemeth one day above another, another &c.* *Gal. 4. 10.* *Ye observe dayes, and moonths &c.* *Coloff. 2. 16.* These and other such places of scripture the best and learnedest reformed writers have thought evident enough to instruct us in our freedom not only from ceremonies but from those circumstances also, though impos'd with a confident perswasion of moralitie in them, which they hold impossible to be in place or time. By what warrant then our opinions and practises herin are of late turnd quite against all other Protestants, and that which is to them orthodoxal, to us become scandalous and punishable by statute, I wish were once again

again better considerd; if we mean not to proclaim a schism in this point from the best and most reformed churches abroad. They who would seem more knowing, confess that these things are indifferent, but for that very cause by the magistrate may be commanded. As if God of his special grace in the gospel had to this end freed us from his own commandments in these things, that our freedom should subject us to a more greevous yoke, the commandments of men. As well may the magistrate call that common or unclean which God hath cleansd, forbidden to S. Peter *Acts 10.15*; as well may he loof'n that which God hath strait'nd, or strait'n that which God hath loof'nd, as he may injoin those things in religion which God hath left

left free, and lay on that yoke which God hath taken off. For he hath not only given us this gift as a special privilege and excellency of the free gospel above the servile law, but strictly, also hath commanded us to keep it and enjoy it. Gal. 5. 13. you are calld to libertie. I Cor. 7. 23. be not made the servants of men. Gal. 5. 14. stand fast therefore in the libertie wherwith Christ hath made us free; and be not intangl'd again with the yoke of bondage. Neither is this a meer command, but for the most part in these forecited places accompanied with the verie waightiest and inmost reasons of Christian religion: Rom. 14. 9, 10. for to this end Christ both dy'd and rose and reviv'd, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother?

&c.

Or, how presum'st thou to be his lord, to be whose only Lord, at least in these things, Christ both dy'd and rose and livd again? We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. why then dost thou not only judge, but persecute in these things for which we are to be accountable to the tribunal of Christ only, our Lord and law-giver? 1 Cor. 7. 23. ye are bought with a price; be not made the servants of men. some trivial price belike, and for some frivolous pretences paid in their opinion, if bought and by him redeemd who is God from what was once the service of God, we shall be enthrald again and forc'd by men to what now is but the service of men. Gal. 4. 31, with 5. 1. we are not children of the bondwoman &c. stand fast therfore &c. Col. 2. 8.

beware

beware least any man spoil you, &c.
after the rudiments of the world,
and not after Christ. Solid reasons
wherof are continu'd through the
whole chapter. v. 10. ye are com-
plete in him, which is the head of all
principalitie and power. not com-
pleted therfore or made the more
religious by those ordinances of
civil power, from which Christ
thit head hath dischargd us ; blot-
ting out the handwriting of ordi-
nances, that was against us, which
was contrarie to us ; and took it out
of the way, nailing it to his cross,
v. 14 : blotting out ordinances
written by God himself, much
more those so boldly written over
again by men. ordinances which
were against us, that is, against
our frailtie , much more those
which are against our conscience.
Let no man therfore judge you in
D respect

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respect of &c. v.16. Gal.4.3, &c.
even so we, when we were children,
were in bondage under the rudiments
of the world: but when the fullness
of time was come, God sent forth his
son &c. to redeem them that were
under the law, that we might receive
the adoption of sons &c. Wherfore
thou art no more a servant, but a son
&c. But now &c. how turn ye a-
gain to the weak and beggarly rudi-
ments, wherunto ye desire again to be
in bondage? ye observe dayes &c.
Hence it planely appeers, that if
we be not free we are not sons,
but still servants unadopted; and
if we turn again to those weak
and beggarly rudiments, we are
not free; yea though willingly
and with a misguided conscience
we desire to be in bondage to
them; how much more then if
unwillingly and against our con-
science?

science? Ill was our condition chang'd from legal to euangelical, and small advantage gotten by the gospel, if for the spirit of adoption to freedom, promis'd us, we receive again the spirit of bondage to fear; if our fear which was then servile towards God only, must be now servile in religion towards men: strange also and preposterous fear, if when and wherin it hath attaint by the redemption of our Saviour to be filial only towards God, it must be now servile towards the magistrate. Who by subjecting us to his punishment in these things, brings back into religion that law of terror and satisfaction, belonging now only to civil crimes; and thereby in effect abolishes the gospel by establishing again the law to a far worse yoke of servi-

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tude upon us then before. It will therfore not misbecome the meanest Christian to put in minde Christian magistrates , and so much the more freely by how much the more they desire to be thought Christian (for they will be thereby, as they ought to be in these things, the more our brethren and the less our lords) that they meddle not rashly with Christian libertie, the birthright and outward testimonie of our adoption: least while they little think it, nay think they do God service, they themselves like the sons of that bondwoman be found persecuting them who are freeborne of the spirit ; and by a sacrilege of not the least aggravation beaving them of that sacred libertie which our Saviour with his own blood purchas'd for them.

A

A fourth reason why the magistrate ought not to use force in religion, I bring from the consideration of all those ends which he can likely pretend to the interposing of his force therin : and those hardly can be other then first the glorie of God ; next either the spiritual good of them whom he forces, or the temporal punishment of their scandal to others. As for the promoting of Gods glory, none, I think, will say that his glorie ought to be promoted in religious things by unwarrantable means, much less by means contrarie to what he hath commanded. That outward force is such, and that Gods glory in the whole administration of the gospel according to his own will and counceil ought to be fulfilld by weakness, at least so refuted, not

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by force ; or if by force, inward and spiritual, not outward and corporeal, is already prov'd at large. That outward force cannot tend to the good of him who is forc'd in religion, is unquestionable. For in religion whatever we do under the gospel, we ought to be therof perswaded without scruple ; and are justified by the faith we have, not by the work we do. *Rom. 14. 5.* *Let every man be fully perswaded in his own mind.* The other reason which follows necessarily, is obvious *Gal. 2. 16*, and in many other places of St. Paul, as the groundwork and foundation of the whole gospel, that *we are justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law.* if not by the works of Gods law, how then by the injanctions of mans law ? Surely force cannot work.

work perswasion, which is faith ; cannot therfore justifie nor pacifie the conscience ; and that which justifies not in the gospel, condemns ; is not only not good, but sinfull to do. *Rom. 14. 23.* *Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.* It concerns the magistrate then to take heed how he forces in religion conscientious men : least by compelling them to do that wherof they cannot be perswaded, that wherein they cannot finde themselves justified, but by thir own consciences condemn'd, instead of aiming at thir spiritual good, he force them to do evil ; and while he thinks himself *Asa, Josia, Nehemia,* he be found *Feroboam*, who causd Israel to sin ; and thereby draw upon his own head all those sins and shipwracks of implicit faith and conformitie, which he

hath forc'd, and all the wounds given to those *little ones*, whom to offend he will finde worse one day then that violent drowning mentioned *Matt. 18. 6.* Lastly as a preface to force, it is the usual pretence, That although tender consciences shall be tolerated, yet scandals thereby given shall not be unpunishd, prophane and licentious men shall not be encourag'd to neglect the performance of religious and holy duties by color of any law giving libertie to tender consciences. By which contrivance the way lies ready, open to them heerafter who may be so minded, to take away by little and little, that liberty which Christ and his gospel, not any magistrate, hath right to give: though this kinde of his giving be but to give with one hand and take away with the other,

ther, which is a deluding not a giving. As for scandals, if any man be offended at the conscientious liberty of another, it is a taken scandal not a given. To heal one conscience we must not wound another: and men must be exhorted to beware of scandals in Christian libertie, not forc'd by the magistrate; least while he goes about to take away the scandal, which is uncertain whether given or taken, he take away our liberty, which is the certain and the sacred gift of God, neither to be touchd by him, nor to be parted with by us. None more cautious of giving scandal then St. Paul. Yet while he made himself servant to all, that he *might gain the more*, he made himself so of his own accord, was not made so by outward force, testifying at the same time

that he was free from all men, 1 Cor. 9. 19 : and therafter exhorts us also Gal. 5. 13. ye were call'd to libertie &c. but by love serve one another: then not by force. As for that fear least prophane and licentious men should be encourag'd to omit the performance of religious and holy duties, how can that care belong to the civil magistrate, especially to his force? For if prophane and licentious persons must not neglect the performance of religious and holy duties, it implies, that such duties they can perform ; which no Protestant will affirm. They who mean the outward performance, may so explane it ; and it will then appear yet more plainly, that such performance of religious and holy duties especially by prophane and licentious persons, is a dishonoring rather then a

wor-

worshiping of God ; and not only by him not requir'd but detested :

Prov. 21. 27. the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination : how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked minde ? To compell therefore the prophane to things holy in his prophaneness , is all one under the gospel, as to have compell'd the unclean to sacrifice in his uncleanness under the law. And I adde withall , that to compell the licentious in his licentiousness , and the conscientious against his conscience, coms all to one ; tends not to the honor of God, but to the multiplying and the aggravating of sin to them both. We read not that Christ ever exercis'd force but once ; and that was to drive prophane ones out of his temple, not to force them in : and if thir beeing there was an offence,

fence, we finde by many other scriptures that thir praying there was an abomination: and yet to the Jewish law that nation, as a servant, was oblig'd; but to the gospel each person is left voluntarie, calld only, as a son, by the preaching of the word; not to be driven in by edicts and force of arms. For if by the apostle, *Rom.* 12.1, we are *beseechd* as *brethren* by the mercies of God to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service or worship, then is no man to be forc'd by the compulsive laws of men to present his body a dead sacrifice, and so under the gospel most unholy and unacceptable, because it is his unreasonable service, that is to say, not only unwilling but unconscionable. But if prophane and licentious,

ous persons may not omit the performance of holy duties, why may they not partake of holy things? why are they prohibited the Lords supper; since both the one and the other action may be outward; and outward performance of dutie may attain at least an outward participation of benefit? The church denying them that communion of grace and thanksgiving, as it justly doth, why doth the magistrate compell them to the union of performing that which they neither truly can, being themselves unholie, and to do seemingly is both hatefull to God, and perhaps no less dangerous to perform holie duties irreligiously then to receive holy signes or sacraments unworthily. All prophane and licentious men, so known, can be considerd but either so without the church

as

as never yet within it, or departed thence of thir own accord, or excommunicate : if never yet within the church, whom the apostle, and so consequently the church have naught to do to judge, as he professes *i Cor. 5. 12*, them by what autoritie doth the magistrate judge, or, which is worse, compell in relation to the church ? if departed of his own accord, like that lost sheep *Luke 15. 4, &c.* the true church either with her own or any borrowd force worries him not in again, but rather in all charitable manner sends after him ; and if she finde him, layes him gently on her shoulders ; bears him, yea bears his burdens ; his errors, his infirmities any way tolerable, *so fulfilling the law of Christ, Gal. 6. 2* : if excommunicate , whom the church hath bid go out, in whose name

name doth the magistrate compell to go in ? The church indeed hinders none from hearing in her publick congregation , for the doors are open to all : nor excommunicates to destruction, but, as much as in her lies, to a final saving. Her meaning therfore must needs bee, that as her driving out brings on no outward penaltie, so no outward force or penaltie of an improper and only a destructive power should drive in again her infectious sheep ; therfore sent out because infectious, and not driven in but with the danger not only of the whole and sound, but also of his own utter perishing . Since force neither instructs in religion nor begets repentance or amendment of life, but, on the contrarie, hardness of heart, formalitie, hypocritie, and, as I said before, everie way increase.

increase of sin ; more and more alienates the minde from a violent religion expelling out and compelling in, and reduces it to a condition like that which the *Britains* complain of in our storie, driven to and fro between the *Picts* and the sea. If after excommunication he be found intractable, incurable, and will not hear the church, he becoms as one never yet within her pale, *a heathen or a publican, Mat. 18.17*; not further to be judgd, no not by the magistrate, unless for civil causes ; but left to the final sentence of that judge, whose coming shall be in flames of fire ; that *Maran athà, I Cor. 16. 22*; then which to him so left nothing can be more dreadful and oftentimes to him particularly nothing more speedie, that is to say, the Lord cometh : In the mean while deliverd

liverd up to Satan, *1 Cor. 5. 5.*
1 Tim. 1. 20. that is, from the fould
of Christ and kingdom of grace
to the world again which is the
kingdom of Satan; and as he was
receivd *from darkness to light, and*
from the power of Satan to God
Acts 26. 18, so now deliverd up
again from light to darkness, and
from God to the power of Satan;
yet so as is in both places mani-
fested, to the intent of saving him,
brought sooner to contrition by
spiritual then by any corporal se-
veritie. But grant it belonging
any way to the magistrate, that
prophane and licentious persons
omit not the performance of holy
duties, which in them were odious
to God even under the law, much
more now under the gospel, yet
ought his care both as a magistrate
and a Christian, to be much more
that

that conscience be not inwardly violated, then that licence in these things be made outwardly conformable : since his part is undoubtedly as a Christian, which puts him upon this office much more then as a magistrate, in all respects to have more care of the conscientious then of the prophanes ; and not for their sakes to take away (while they pretend to give) or to diminish the rightfull libertie of religious consciences.

On these four scriptural reasons as on a firm square this truth, the right of Christian and euangelic liberty, will stand immoveable against all those pretended consequences of license and confusion, which for the most part men most licentious and confus'd themselves, or such as whose severitie would

would be wiser then divine wisdom, are ever aptest to object against the waies of God : as if God without them when he gave us this libertie, knew not of the worst which these men in thir arrogance pretend will follow : yet knowing all their worst, he gave us this liberty as by him judgd best. As to those magistrates who think it their work to settle religion, and those ministers or others, who so oft call upon them to do so, I trust, that having well considerd what hath bin here argu'd, neither they will continue in that intention, nor these in that expectation from them: when they shall finde that the settlement of religion belongs only to each particular church by perswasive and spiritual means within it self, and that the defence only of the church belongs

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belongs to the magistrate. Had he once learnt not further to concern himself with church affairs, half his labor might be spar'd, and the commonwealth better tended. To which end, that which I premis'd in the beginning, and in due place treated of more at large, I desire now concluding, that they would consider seriously what religion is: and they will find it to be in summe, both our beleet and our practise depending upon God only. That there can be no place then left for the magistrate or his force in the settlement of religion, by appointing either what we shall beleeve in divine things or practise in religious (neither of which things are in the power of man either to perform himself or to enable others) I perswade me in the Christian ingenuitie of all religi-
ous

ous men, the more they examin seriously, the more they will finde cleerly to be true : and finde how false and deceivable that common saying is, which is so much reli'd upon, that the Christian Magistrate is *custos utriusque tabulae*, keeper of both tables ; unless is meant by keeper the defender only: neither can that maxim be maintaind by any prooff or argument which hath not in this discours first or last bin refuted. For the two tables, or ten commandements, teach our dutie to God and our neighbour from the love of both ; give magistrates no autoritie to force either : they seek that from the judicial law ; though on false grounds, especially in the first table, as I have shewn ; and both in first and second execute that autoritie for the most part not

not according to Gods judicial laws but thir own. As for civil crimes and of the outward man, which all are not, no not of those against the second table, as that of coveting ; in them what power they have, they had from the beginning, long before *Moses* or the two tables were in being. And whether they be not now as little in being to be kept by any Christian as they are two legal tables, remane's yet as undecided, as it is sure they never were yet deliverd to the keeping of any Christian magistrate. But of these things perhaps more some other time ; what may serve the present hath bin above discourtst sufficiently out of the scripturés : and to those produc'd might be added testimonies, examples, experiences of all succeeding ages to these

these times asserting this doctrine: but having herin the scripture so copious and so plane, we have all that can be properly calld true strength and nerve; the rest would be but pomp and incumbrance. Pomp and ostentation of reading is admir'd among the vulgar: but doubtless in matters of religion he is learnedest who is planest. The brevitie I use, not exceeding a small manual, will not therfore, I suppose, be thought the less considerable, unless with them perhaps who think that great books only can determin great matters. I rather chose the common rule, not to make much ado where less may serve. Which in controversies and those especially of religion, would make them less tedious, and by consequence read ofter, by many more, and with more benefit.

The end.

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